

August 27, 2003

SUBJECT: NASS FY 03 Performance Appraisal Cycle

TO: NASS Supervisors and Managers

THROUGH: Joseph T. Reilly  
Deputy Administrator for Field Operations

FROM: Theresa Bailey, Human Resources Specialist  
Performance and Awards Staff  
REE Services Branch, HRD

NASS Performance Appraisal Form 435A for the current performance rating period October 1, 2002, through September 30, 2003, is due in Headquarters by November 7, 2002.

NASS supervisors and managers will use NASS Form 435A to officially document employee performance for the current rating period. Form 435A, with the original signatures of the employee, supervisor, and reviewing official, is the only official form required to be submitted to Headquarters. A signed copy of the Form 435A should be given to the employee and a copy should be retained in the originating office. Refer to PSM-57-97 for more information on NASS guidelines on the performance appraisal review process, documentation of goals and accomplishments, and the completion of all other appropriate forms. Enclosure 1, *Checklist for Review of NASS Appraisal Forms*, is provided for your use.

While many of you are familiar with the appraisal process, here are a couple of reminders:

- Employees who have been covered under performance elements and standards for 60 calendar days or more are ratable and must receive an appraisal using Form 435A. If an employee has not been covered under performance elements and standards for the minimum appraisal period of 60 calendar days, the appraisal period must be extended and the employee must be rated at the end of the 60 day period.
- Forms 435A for employees who are no longer with the Agency or for employees who otherwise cannot be rated, must be returned with a note explaining the circumstances.

- If at any time during the rating period a supervisor determines that an employee's performance in any critical element or the overall performance is less than fully successful, the supervisor should contact their servicing Employee Relations Specialist in the Employee Relations Branch, Human Resources Division. If this situation applies to one of your employees, do not rate the employee without consulting with an Employee Relations Specialist.
- Form 435C is an optional form where goals and accomplishments for a rating cycle can be documented. When completed, a copy of the form should be given to the employee and the original is to be retained by the supervisor. This form, when completed, may be used as justification of accomplishments and achievements for Extra Effort awards over \$500.
- Form 435D is used during both the interim/mid-year and final appraisal discussions for all employees. One copy is completed by the supervisor, and one copy is for self-rating by the employee. Optionally, the supervisor may request this form be completed by peers or members of teams of which the employee worked with for at least 60 calendar days during the rating cycle.
- Two levels of approval are required on the Form 435A, that of the rating supervisor and of the reviewing official.
- The rating supervisor and the reviewing official cannot be the same person.
- A performance rating should not be discussed with an employee until after the reviewing official has approved and signed the rating form.
- If an employee has recently transferred to a new SSO or Headquarters unit, the current supervisor should get input from the employee's previous supervisor when completing the employee's appraisal. This should be done so the entire year's performance is included in the review process.

The original paper copy of all Form 435As, must be completed and sent to the address below by November 7, 2002.

Field Operations, Attn: Mary DeNardo  
Room 4143, South Building  
Washington, DC 20250

Original Forms 435B, 435C, and 435D, along with copies of Form 435A, and any other performance documentation, should be kept by the rating supervisor.

For additional questions regarding performance appraisals, please contact Theresa Bailey, Performance and Awards Staff, HRD, AFM, on 301-504-1452 or by e-mail at [tbailey@ars.usda.gov](mailto:tbailey@ars.usda.gov). Questions involving NASS procedures and policy should be referred to Jim Brueggen, on 202-720-4889.

Enclosure

cc:

Bonnie Beavers, MSB/HRD  
Vicki Hanbury, ER/HRD  
Melissa Hill, MSB/HRD  
Performance and Awards Staff, HRD

## **CHECKLIST FOR REVIEW OF NASS APPRAISAL FORMS**

- Section I**      Make sure the “Name” and “SSN” are complete.
- Section II**      Make sure you have all three signatures and dates. If information is missing, try to obtain it or document why it is missing.
- Section III**      There should be at least one documented progress review. If a progress review was held and not documented, have this block completed.
- Section IV**      Make sure critical elements are identified and the appropriate rating block checked.
- Section V**      Make sure the rating level is checked.
- Section VI**      Make sure you have all three signatures and dates. If information is missing, try to obtain it or document why it is missing.
- Additional:**      The minimal performance appraisal period is 60 days. Make sure there are 60 days between the employee signature and the date in Section II and the signature and date in Section VI.
- The supervisor and reviewing official cannot be the same person.
- All original appraisal documents must be kept together.
- Ensure that supervisors have separate standards that address supervision and EO/CR.
- Non-supervisors do not have a separate EO/CR element. Ensure that EO/CR criteria is incorporated in another critical element for non-supervisors.